

TREASURES FROM THE WRITINGS OF JACOB BOEHME

Introduction to Boehme

Jacob Boehme, "chosen servant of God," was born in Alt Seidenburg, Germany, in 1575.

John Wesley, in his day, required all of his preachers to study the writings of Jacob Boehme; and the learned theologian, Willam Law, said of him: "Jacob Boehme was not a messenger of anything new in religion, but the mystery of all that was old and true in religion and nature, was opened up to him," — "the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

Born of poor, but pious, Lutheran parents, from childhood, Jacob Boehme was concerned about "the salvation of his soul." Although daily occupied, first as a shepherd, and afterward as a shoemaker, he was always an earnest student of the Holy Scriptures; but he could not understand "the ways of God," and he became "perplexed, even to melancholy, — pressed out of measure." He said: "I knew the Bible from beginning to end, but could find no consolation in Holy Writ; and my spirit, as if moving in a great storm, arose in God, carrying with it my whole heart, mind and will and wrestled with the love and mercy of God, that his blessing might descend upon me, that my mind might be illumined with his Holy Spirit, that I might understand his will and get rid of my sorrow . . .

"I had always thought much of how I might inherit the kingdom of heaven; but finding in myself a powerful opposition, in the desires that belong to the flesh and blood, I began a battle against

my corrupted nature; and with the aid of God, I made up my mind to overcome the inherited evil will, . . . break it, and enter wholly into the love of God in Christ Jesus . . . I sought the heart of Jesus Christ, the center of all truth; and I resolved to regard myself as dead in my inherited form, until the Spirit of God would take form in me, so that in and through him, I might conduct my life.

"I stood in this resolution, fighting a battle with myself, until the light of the Spirit, a light entirely foreign to my unruly nature, began to break through the clouds. Then, after some farther hard fights with the powers of darkness, my spirit broke through the doors of hell, and penetrated even unto the innermost essence of its newly born divinity where it was received with great love, as a bridegroom welcomes his beloved bride.

"No word can express the great joy and triumph I experienced, as of a life out of death, as of a resurrection from the dead! . . . While in this state, as I was walking through a field of flowers, in fifteen minutes, I saw through the mystery of creation, the original of this world and of all creatures. . . . Then for seven days I was in a continual state of ecstasy, surrounded by the light of the Spirit, which immersed me in contemplation and happiness. I learned what God is, and what is his will. . . . I knew not how this happened to me, but my heart admired and praised the Lord for it!"

At the age of twenty-five, Boehme was given another great illumination, in which the Lord let him see farther into "the heart of things, . . . the true nature of God and man, and the relationship existing between them." Ten years later "the divine order of nature" was opened up to him, and he was inspired to write what the Lord had revealed to him.

From 1612 to 1624, he wrote thirty books, "My books are written" Boehme said "only for those who desire to be sanctified and united to God, from whom they came . . . Not through my understanding, but in my resignation in Christ . . from him have I received knowledge of his mysteries. God dwells in that which will resign itself up, with all its reason and skill, unto him . . . I have prayed strongly that I might not write except for the glory of God and the instruction and benefit fo my brethren."

Jacob Boehme's persecutions and suffering began with the publication of his first book, "Aurora," at the age of thirty-five. then not withstanding five years of enforced silence, banishment from his home town, and an ecclesiastical trial for heresy, his "interior wisdom" began to be recognized by the nobility of Germany; but at this time, at the age of forty-nine, Boehme died, "happy," as he said, "in the midst of the heavenly music of the paradise of God."

Passages from Boehme

MAN IN "THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY"

"O great and holy God, I pray thee, set open my inwardness to me; that I may rightly know what I am; and open in me what was shut up in Adam." . . .

"God stirred himself to produce creation . . . He was desirous of having children of his own kind . . . Creation was an act of the free will of God; God unfolded his eternal nature, and through his active love, or desire, he caused that which heretofore had been in him merely as spirit (as an image contained in a piece of wood before the artist has cut it out), to become substantial, corporeal.

"God longed after the visible substance of his similitude and image, and so created man . . . Man was created the child of Omnipotency; a pure virgin, after the form of the Eternal. . . . with a pure mind and holy faculties, in which dwelt no lust. . . . His will was in God. He was to be a perfect symbol of God; to attain the great fountain of meekness and love welling up from the heart of God. He was a virgin without a feminine form, after the form of the Eternal; full of chastity, modesty and purity, in the image of God. . .

"He had both fire and light in him, and therefore, love. . . No knowledge of any evil was in him; no lust, no covetousness, no pride, no envy, no anger, nothing but love. . . .the Celestial image clothed him with divine power. He could have removed mountains with a word; he could rule over the sun, moon and stars; all was in his power, the fire, the air, the water and the earth. Every living creature feared him. His life fluid was heavenly. His will was in God, and God was in him. He was in paradise, clothed with the heavenly glory. . . . the light of the majesty of God. . . . He lived on paradisiacal fruit and the Word of God. . . . He knew no woe, no sickness, no death; he lived in joy and delight, without toil or care.

"Man was created free and responsible, with a will to move in whatever direction he chose; to be nothing in himself, to be one with God; and in freedom to pass into that state of the Son, to give all and to receive all from the Father, for the glory and power of God; or — to enter and remain in the world of darkness. For he was the son of God, and could have gone on into the manifestation of God, and God's deeds of wonder!

"Understand, O man, what thou wast before the fall; created to live eternally in love! . . . Know how sin arose, that thou mayst lay hold of the remedy for it!

"God created his image and likeness in a single man. Adam was a man and also a woman; . . . for God did not, in the beginning make man and woman, he did not create

them at the same time, because the life in which the two properties of masculine and feminine are united in one, constitutes man in the image of God, . . . after the manner of the Father's and the Son's property, which together are one God, not divided; for perfect love is not found in one property, but in the two, one entering into the other.

"The fire, and light (which is the meekness and love of God) was in Adam. The fire of God is the root of all things, and the origin of life, the cause of all strength and power. Lucifer took offense at the light, the humility of God, and entered into the fierce might of the fire, for he would domineer . . . He turned away from the will of the Eternal, for the fierce power of the fire delighted him more than the meekness in the still habitation of God, and he became the prince of this world. . . . He ever moveth in a fire which consumeth all else to himself. . . . The devil's fire desires a body to devour and turn to nothing, to darkness.

"God's fire is coupled with love; his fire causes light; and light, love; light desireth substance, a body to fill, and does not consume; it takes away nothing, but it quickens; . . . love giveth itself freely to all. . . . The natural comprehendeth not light. . . . Light changeth the false imagination into the truth . . . Fire alone makes a hard set self-hood . . . God moveth in the light of meekness, and hath a substance, water, 'the water of life', which holds fire captive . . . 'The water of life' alone can make immortal bodies.

"Adam could have generated a heavenly kingdom out of himself. . . . Eve was within Adam as a pure, chaste, virginal power. He could then generate in a virginal state, and procreate by means of his will, and out of his own substance, without pain or laceration:.. .

. for one being could have been born of another, in the same way as Adam in his virginal state, was projected into being, in the image of God; because that which is of the Eternal, can also procreate, multiply itself, according to the law of Eternity. In time there was to have been born the King of all men, who was to take possession of God's kingdom, as Ruler of all created beings, in place of cast-out Lucifer, now prince of this world.

"Adam saw within himself two forms of being, belonging to the paradisiacal world; and then he saw one also without, belonging to this world; and his soul imagined after the outward. . . . Then came the command to him, 'Eat not of the mixed fruit of good and evil, lest ye die'! But Adam continued to imagine after the earthly dominion: . . . he imagined after the beasts and introduced himself into bestial lust, to eat and to generate as beasts do. . . . He desired to live in himself and be lord. . . . He thought he would eat both the paradisiacal and the forbidden fruit and so live forever; . . . but he had brought the earthly quality into the pure, celestial substance, and his light was being extinguished; the divine image was disappearing, the earthly appearing.

"He could no longer live in obedience to the will of the Father; . . . his lust for the earthly fruit overcame him, and he sank into a deep sleep; and God saw that it was not possible for him to live in obedience, and let him sleep; sleep signifieth death.

"So Adam cast himself out from the majesty of God, with his own will; he could not continue to walk in his innocence, that he might have his confirmation in the divine way of production; for he had turned from 'the speaking of the word' into self-will, lust and 'speaking good and evil'; and God's good will perished in him.

"God had forbidden Adam his false desire, lust after earthly fruit and power and virtue; and Adam had no necessity for these things; he had the paradisiacal fruit, the Word of God, and no want or death. . . . His eyes, which might have continued to see always and eternally, the glory of God, closed in sleep. . . . God permitted Adam to sleep; otherwise, in the power of fire, in his selfishness, he would have become a devil."

MAN IN "THE IMAGE OF THE EARTHY"

"We Have Borne the Image of the Earthy"

"Adam was given that which he would have, . . . the terrestrial woman, in place of the celestial virgin; for Adam's treachery toward his heavenly consort, disqualified him for her, and left him only fitted for an 'Eve'! During his sleep, the woman was made out of Adam, and the image of God was destroyed. . . . The man and the woman were made into creatures of this outer world, fashioned into mortality.

"Adam and Eve had still a paradisiacal consciousness, but mixed with terrestrial desire. They were 'naked' although 'not ashamed' until they had eaten of the earthly fruit, . . . Adam went out from the will of God into the world, and was captivated by it, and ate of earthly fruit. Then the spirit of this world took his soul captive, and his faculties became earthly, his substance bestial.

"After eating of the tree of self-knowledge, of good and evil, . . . by willing otherwise than God willed, . . . man became unholy; . . . he died to the holy, heavenly image, and lived in the awakened bestial image of the serpent. . . . The animal being had swallowed

up the celestial state, and Adam and Eve then had common flesh, hard bones, bestial members, and needed bestial clothing.

"Man was now separated from God. . . . Lusting after the earthly, the holy anointing oil, given of Christ, was dried up; he became shut up in a gross, bestial image, for his flesh now belonged to the earth and to death; the dominion of this world now dwelt in him.

"The desire of a beast is only to nourish itself and to multiply itself. It hath no understanding of any higher thing. It hath its own spirit, whereby it liveth and groweth and consumeth itself. . . . If God had intended that man should live as the beasts, he would have created him in the similitude of, and with the beasts. . . . If he had created him for this earthly, miserable, naked, toilsome, corruptible, animal life, he would have made men and women from the start; and both sexes would have come forth in the 'spoken word,' into the division of both properties, as it was in other earthly creatures.

"Lust originated in Adam, but thereupon his perverted desire began to be excited in the woman. . . . Eve was then moved by her lust, which the devil awakened in her, and desiring to be skillful, she became foolish. . . . The serpent said to her, 'Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods.' It is true that her earthly eyes were opened, but her spiritual eyes became closed; with earthly eyes, man cannot see the kingdom of God.

"When Adam took notice of his bestial form, he was ashamed, and God said; 'Adam, where art thou'? His body did hide itself, so ashamed was his poor soul and he said, 'I was afraid; I was naked, and hid myself'. The precious heavenly virgin, with which he was clothed, was lost; his crystalline image was destroyed.

"After the fall, man was subject to the limitations of time, and was degraded to the animal state of being, so that heaven, paradise and divinity became a mystery to him. . . . God cursed the earth for man's sake, and no paradisiacal fruit grew any more; all was gone, save only the mercy and the grace of God! . . . After the fall, men lived in weakness, as today. They begat children in two kingdoms of wrath and love, evil and good, Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob.

"When man fell, the paradise of all heavenly knowledge withdrew, and wisdom was in grief, until God gave the promise of the seed of the woman."

MAN IN "THE RESTORED IMAGE"

"We Shall also Bear the Image of the Heavenly"

"All the teachings of Christ have no other object than to show us how we may re-ascend to our virginal unity with him There is ever a strife over man's image; the devil and hell say, 'It is mine, by right of nature; it is generated out of my root.' The spirit of this world says, 'It is mine, I give it life, nourishment, and bring it up, and give to it my power and wonders.' The kingdom of God says, 'I have set my heart upon it; I have regenerated it; I sought and found it; it is mine. It is now in my kingdom, and it must reveal my wonders!' And the poor soul of man is in continual warfare.

"O man, when the devil seeks to hinder thee, set thyself against him; oppose him strongly! Thou hast, in Christ, far greater power than he! Take all thy sins and throw them at the devil, and say, 'Thou art the cause of them all! I take the mercy of God, the death

of Christ, to myself! Therein will I roll myself' . . . For the last Adam was the Offering and the Liberator to set thee free!

"Cease to please thyself, and keep from thy natural will, then wilt thou fall into the will of God; and then the devil cannot meddle with thee! Man's own will brought him to his own center, separated from God. . . . Man began in the Word of God, but broke off from it; he must come back and be regenerated, to become as he was made originally, inbreathed by God.

"The heavenly image, lost in Adam, the lightlife of Christ, has been the birth-right of man ever since the 'treader down' of the serpent of self-will was promised. . . . Christ restores this image through regeneration, by which man re-enters into the one Tree, Christ. . . . This divine fire of the Spirit of Christ continually crushes the head of the serpent, i.e. the desire of the flesh, beneath his feet. . . . for the devil ever holdeth before the soul the unclean forbidden tree; for he would have inward dominion in man. . . . When man yieldeth himself wholly to God, his will falls again into the unsearchable will of God.

"Such a man as Adam was before his Eve, shall arise again, and enter into, and eternally possess paradise. . . . Man will enter again into the 'speaking Word' and speak with God!

"The image of God is the fair virgin, which substantiated by the regenerate life, restores to man the wife of his youth (Mal.2:14), the divine womanhood of Adam's two-fold perfection. This image, shut up in Adam, could only be stirred by the power of God That it might again appear, God manifested himself in Christ. . . . The eternal virginity, lost by Adam, came unto Mary by the Word of life. The fire of divine love in her being, in the virginal essence, (corrupted in Adam, and now restored), brought to birth that 'Holy

Thing', the Son of God. . . . And Christ in man makes man alive; restores again that which the devil severed in the first Adam(into the male and female), making them one again — a virginal manhood — a son of God.

"Christ, the divine spiritual Sun of Righteousness, enters again into the original matrix, out of which the life of man has taken its origin, — the eternal Word. . . . The hungry soul absorbs the Word, and then returns to the original spiritual state, and becomes a temple of divine love, wherein the Father receives his beloved Son; and in which the Holy Spirit dwells . . . The creature is not God; it remaineth eternally under God; but God blazeth through it with his love-fire, his light and shining; and that shining, man retaineth as long as his will remaineth in God's light. . . .Where the will is, there is the heart also.

"As Christ was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger, so is Christ in man ever born amidst the animals in man. The new-born Savior is ever laid in a cradle between the ox of self-will and the ass of ignorance, in the stable of the animal condition in man; and from thence the king of pride (as Herod), finds his kingdom endangered, and seeks to kill the child, who is to become the ruler of the 'New Jerusalem' in man.

"O man, take heed of pride; the devil fleeth into it! . . .Take heed of covetousness! The covetous man is the greatest fool upon earth; he gathers that which he must leave to others, and gains only an evil conscience and treasures in hell! But he that trusteth God hath continually enough; he gets a new body, which neither hunger, cold, nor heat, can affect; he hath a conscience at rest, and will eternally rejoice in his treasure he has laid up in heaven! . . . Take heed of anger; that is the devil's sword, with which he commits all murders. If the soul is given to lust, pleasure and dominion of this world, the devil doth not sift it so strongly; he carrieth it in his triumphant chariot!. . . .Take heed of the perfect pattern God has

given, of what man should and must be, — Jesus! . . . And pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit; resolve not to let him go, until he bless thee!

"The Holy Spirit, the moving power of God, the former of his Word, which expresseth the will of God, the heart of God, openeth the heart of man to the virtues of God's Word. . . . Then the animal within must die! One cannot remain an animal and become divine. . . . When the soul is freed from the evil beast then it is open to Christ, and his divine love-fire. . . . God's Son is love and light and life; for man to pass from fire to light, there is only one way, through death.

"Man must cease to act by his false imagination; he must put it to death—into the hiddenness; nail it to the cross of Christ, and there, through lack of indulgence, nourishment, it dies; and then comes the 'new-birth',— light, liberty and love! . . . By the power of the light and love of Christ, man overcomes the fire of self-will, and re-establishes his soul in the divine image of God. . . . Then must he keep his imagination fixed in the love of God; for all outside is darkness. "The two kingdoms of fire and light, — wrath and love, part at the cross. On the cross the Son of God redeemed the soul unto the heavenly image, the Word, the eternal body of Christ, which is heavenly. . . . In Christ the divine kingdom standeth open, and every one that will, may enter in; whosoever puts his will away from himself, and puts it into Christ, . . . when that soul is born of the Word and the Spirit of Christ, then the inward body of the soul becometh a new creation in Christ; . . . God and this inward man become one. . . . Mortification of self-will and the recipiency of grace, is all a human can do to work out his own salvation.

"The going on 'to perfection', includes both an increase of knowledge, and the greatest holiness of life. . . . Sin must be brought into the judgment of God, and the holy love fire of God must consume it. When the will is converted, the soul enters into

such sorrow for earthly iniquity that it will have nothing of iniquity any more.

"The regenerated, new-born soul in Christ has not only a new spirit, but is a new creation, with an everlasting (spiritual) body. . . . He is not of this world; he is a stranger to this world, with no understanding of it. . . . He is in the paradise of God, and desires nothing else but that which Christ within his soul desires. . . . This soul must die to letters, reason, scholarship and knowledge, to enter into the only one true life — Jesus! . . . For hard thoughts, high fancies and conceits are not necessary, but the love and mercy of God — to be one with him. . . . This soul must keep plunged in the humility, love and patience of God; . . . go every hour out of death, and into life!

"He must learn how to go out of discussion and vanity; . . . break the power of the selfish will, which no man can do by his own human power. . . . He must give up his self-will as dead, that he may be submerged in the love of God. . . . To every self-centered desire this soul must die; for all that doth vex and plague is the self-hood. . . . In all the world there is no such cruel beast as that which is in the heart of every man and woman, — self-love!

"What hinders men from seeing and hearing God, is their own hearing, seeing and willing; by their own wills they separate themselves from the will of God. They see and hear within their own desires, which obstructs them from seeing and hearing God. Terrestrial and material things overshadow them, and they cannot see beyond their own human nature. If they would be still, desist from thinking and feeling with their own

self-hood, subdue the self-will, enter into a state of resignation, into a divine union with Christ, who sees God, and hears God, and speaks with him, who knows the word and will of God; then would the eternal hearing seeing and speaking become revealed to them.

"Self-will cannot comprehend anything of God. It is not in God, but external to him. If we live in Christ, the Spirit of Christ will see through us, and in us. We will see and know what Christ desires.

"Christ dwelling in the soul, causes his light to become a holy substance, a spiritual body, a true temple, in which the Holy Spirit dwells. . . . Self-hood hath not true substance, in which light can be steadfast. It desireth not God's meekness.

"In meekness and lowliness consisteth the kingdom of heaven. . . . God's substance is humility. He who came to rescue us from the evil power, described himself as 'meek and lowly'; and he could announce, when quit of coarse flesh and blood disguise, that to him was given 'all power in heaven and in earth'. . . . The mysteries of God are revealed to the meek. Let the soul lose no time in trying to clothe itself with humility. . . . Humility is the throne of love; unless this throne is firmly established, love is quickly deposed by every spasm of self-will. . . . It is more blessed to continue under the cross of Christ, in patience and meekness, than to bring down 'fire from heaven'! . . . There is no contention in Christ, but love and humility.

"The flowers of the earth do not grudge at one another, though one be more beautiful and fuller of virtue than another, but they stand humbly, kindly, one by another, and enjoy one another's virtue; so we all please God, if we give up ourselves into his will; if we all stand humbly in his field.

"Our trance of selfishness must end, for we are all being organized, by the one only life, in the one body. In the body of Christ, self-seeking is a monstrosity! . . . The whole body must be 'fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint (or

joining) supplieth, . . . unto the edifying of itself in love.' The second manifestation of Christ to his people will be in their bodies. . . . Our Lord hath need of each one in his great, mystical body; and they must all be one in him, the Anointed.

"There is a life, this world comprehendeth it not; . . . it hath no fire to consume, but a mighty fire in light and love and joy; a fire of brightness and majesty, no pain therein. . . .It hath a body without defect, want, misery, anger, death or devil. . . . The Holy Spirit is its air and spirit; it is filled with love and joy. . . . This life has been from eternity. . . . uprising and blossoming! It is not of this earth, but substantial, — the eternal life! . . . and all who have received this life, at the end of the age, will be presented pure and without blemish, . . . one body in Christ!

"In the time of the end, the time of the Lily, these writings will be sought as serviceable . . . to all such who are shooting forth into the fair Lily in the kingdom of God, who are in the process of birth, are these lines written; that each one may be strengthened, and bud in the life of God, and grow, and bear fruit in the Tree of paradise; . . . that each branch and twig in this fair Tree may contribute, help and shelter all the other branches and twigs, that this Tree may become a great Tree! . . . Then shall we all rejoice, one with another, with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory'!"

AMEN !

Note: The excerpts of Boehme presented on this site are taken from the 18th century translations done by William Law.
